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# Exploring Perceptions of Curriculum Change in Initial English Language Teacher Education: A Case in Argentina

## *La exploración de percepciones de cambio curricular en la formación docente inicial en lengua inglesa: un caso de Argentina*

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**Abstract:** With the implementation of a new national education law in Argentina, the theoretical underpinnings, structure, and knowledge base for initial teacher education are being transformed. In the province of Chubut, southern Argentina, 2014 was devoted to the delineation of new jurisdictional programmes (Banegas, 2014), and 2015 was the year of implementing such programmes. In this paper I examine the perceptions of a group of students at an initial English language teacher education (IELTE) programme who decided to transfer from their 2013 cohort to the 2015 cohort under the new programme. I also examine teacher educators' perceptions of the new programme. Through both students' and teacher educators' views, I compare and contrast the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the changes introduced in IELTE in my context.

**Keywords:** teacher education; curriculum; innovation; subject matter; change.

**Resumen:** A partir de la implementación de una nueva ley de educación nacional en Argentina, la formación docente inicial ha iniciado un proceso de transformación en su marco teórico, estructura y saberes. En 2014 la provincia argentina de Chubut inició el delineamiento de sus nuevos diseños curriculares de formación docente inicial (Banegas, 2014), y en 2015 se comenzó con la implementación de los mismos. En el presente artículo, se examinan las percepciones de un grupo de estudiantes del profesorado de inglés que decidió cambiarse de cohorte para acogerse al nuevo diseño curricular. Asimismo se examinan las percepciones de docentes formadores en el nuevo diseño. Mediante las opiniones de estudiantes y docentes formadores se comparan las fortalezas, debilidades y desafíos de los cambios introducidos en el contexto chubutense.

**Palabras clave:** formación docente; currículo; innovación; conocimiento disciplinar; cambio.

## INTRODUCTION

We all live in dynamic contexts. Society changes in all directions and we change with it. Such reconfigurations produce a tremendous impact on all levels of formal education, from its conceptualization to its implementation and evaluation. Nonetheless, these changes do not operate at a reactive level solely. Changes in education develop in response to the present and possible future scenarios. Change is envisioned as innovation.

In the field of teacher education, sociocultural theory has been a major source of innovation with an emphasis on the social construction of knowledge (Johnson, 2006). One of the major concerns in initial English language teacher education (IELTE) programmes is the dialogue between scientific concepts, practice and student-teachers' own theories and learner biographies. In a study which examines innovation in a specific programme, Johnson (2013) posits that those involved in teacher education should ask ourselves questions which allow us to evaluate the nature of our activities and the ways in which we support and enhance the development of teaching expertise.

In this article I examine the perceptions of a group of student-teachers at an initial English language teacher education (IELTE) programme in the province of Chubut (Argentina). These student-teachers decided to transfer from their 2013 cohort to the 2015, as the latter would follow a newly designed IELTE curriculum. I also examine teacher educators' perceptions under the new programme. Through both students, and teacher educators' views, I discuss the changes introduced in IELTE in my context.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

By definition, teacher education belongs to the level of higher education. In this article I define initial teacher education as that period of formal teacher education which usually occurs before professional practice and provides student-teachers with the foundations of general didactics, specific didactics, and subject-matter knowledge. This period may include short crash courses as well as university-based courses of approximately four years. This period is not always conceived as pre-service teacher education, as in some contexts there may be unqualified teachers who decide to take an IELTE course after some years of teaching experience.

According to Sanchez de Magurno (2015), teacher education and curriculum development in the current landscape are being shaped by three binary relations: self-evaluation and innovation, permanence and change, and educational trans-

formation and contexts. However, these relations appear in the literature through multiple combinations and theoretical tensions which signal that educational transformations in higher education are necessary. Such transformations imply thorough changes in the structures which shape the way in which future teachers are educated.

The relevance often assigned to contextualised subject matter knowledge in IELTE may indicate, in line with Bicocca (2014), that higher education needs to maintain its interest in knowledge generation and truth seeking against purely instrumental purposes and the marketisation of higher education (Cole & Pitfield, 2006). In relation to IELTE, we may agree that both know-what and know-how are equally important and foundational in the first steps of the teaching profession. Back in 2002, Lawes noted two important changes in teacher education: (1) the replacement of “training” by “education”, with the aim of providing a less Fordian view of education, and (2) the necessity to imbue programmes with more theoretical content both in relation to subject matter (e.g. Linguistics) and pedagogical knowledge (e.g. specific didactics and second language acquisition). With the impulse of technology, this latter has received considerable attention from different research fronts to constitute what we now call TPACK, technological pedagogical content knowledge, and its presence in teacher education curriculum reforms is unequivocal (Tai, 2015; Tondeur et al., 2013; Wach, 2015).

One line to be explored in relation to the enhancement of theorisation in initial teacher education is that of research. Gone are the days in which teacher education was only conceived as a reproductive matrix of knowledge generated by researchers not connected with praxis in education. Research may be connected with transformations and innovations as indicated by Munthe and Rogne (2015). According to these authors, teacher education courses at undergraduate level do emphasise research, even when it is usually lecturer-led. In Norway, the context of their study, they found that courses included opportunities to learn research skills and conduct small research projects. They also found that lecturers are becoming experts in research through postgraduate studies and collaborative research projects.

In the bibliography we can also encounter articles which examine student-teacher situated identities (Baum, 2015), and the motivations to become ELT teachers whether in face-to-face or online programmes (Banegas & Manzur, 2014). For example, Sali (2013) investigated the perceptions of 100 trainees in their second year of training at an ELT department in one Turkish university. According to the participants’ responses, “intrinsic career value” and “loving the subject matter itself” were the most frequently mentioned reasons for choosing the ELT career. It is interesting to note that the specific subject matter, in this case, the English

language, acts as a motivating factor for the teaching profession. Such a factor has been examined by Woodgate-Jones (2008), who investigated pre-service teachers' confidence in their linguistic competence and intercultural understanding in the UK. Results indicated that a strong sense of intercultural linguistic competence produces a positive impact on motivation and professional practices. In a similar vein, Haneda and Alexander (2015) found that ESL teachers can transcend the confines of the classroom when they have received preparation on intercultural competence. Intercultural competence and intercultural citizenship development, as Amez (2015), Porto (2015) and Porto and Byram (2015) illustrate and conceptualise, appear to be part of the transformations towards new contents and skills which need to be present in IELTE.

Another transformation comes with incorporation of inclusivity in teacher education programmes. If nations wish to promote inclusive education, then teachers need to understand and experience inclusive teaching in their own education. In a study on the promotion of inclusivity in teacher education, DeLuca (2012) observed that coherent field-practices, critical self-reflection and class dialogue were pedagogies usually cited among administrators, trainees, and lecturers. In this respect, we may then state that inclusive education "begins at home" and it should be included not only with reference to future learners in formal education but also to student-teachers themselves so that coherence is sought between initial teacher education and the educational levels for which it prepares future teachers. Along these lines, Florian, Young and Rouse (2010) focused on curricular reform in an initial teacher education course with the aim of understanding how teachers were prepared for inclusivity and diversity. Results derived from lectures and interviews revealed that inclusivity at a theoretical level outweighed the discussion and practicing of teaching strategies and practical tools to enact inclusivity.

In conclusion, the literature emanating from initial teacher education interests indicates that innovation and curriculum transformations need to consider a sociocultural and holistic view of student-teachers, their trajectories, motivations, and the role that subject matter plays in the developing teacher education.

## CONTEXT

With the advent of the National Law of Education in Argentina (Law 26, 206), all levels of formal education underwent progressive transformations in each province of the country. Needless to say, such transformations became central to pre-service and in-service teacher education as the new structuring concepts and pedagogical

underpinnings had to be understood by those teachers who would then make those changes happen.

At national level, the reforms in teacher education sought the configuration of a new cohesive, congruent and integrative system which is based on a diversity of contributions, resources, and experiences. Researchers and teacher educators have examined Argentine teacher education curriculum reforms and programmes from multiple perspectives (Bonadeo, 2013; Cadario, 2014; Marzoa, Rodríguez & Schoo, 2011; Sarasa 2014). In the province of Chubut, southern Argentina, the new curricula (*Diseños Curriculares* in Spanish) were considered an organising framework characterised by dynamic fluidity. A curriculum was conceptualised as a curriculum in action open to the particularities of each institution and local contexts. Future teachers were envisioned as transformatory intellectuals. The new curriculum for IELTE programmes “moved from fragmentation to unification through negotiated participation” (Banegas, 2014, p. 234).

### *A brief look at the 2007 and 2014 curricula*

Both the 2007 and the 2014 curricula shared the vision of future teachers as transformatory intellectuals who empower others. They also agreed that a curriculum is an open and public document with clear technical as well as political definitions of teacher education. Teaching was conceptualised as the engineering of certain conditions for learners to learn what we believe is worth learning. In turn, learning was approached as situated. This means that situated learning is a complex activity which includes mental, physical, emotional, and cognitive processes which occur in an intersubjective network. In teacher education, situated learning is coherent with the conception of a flexible curriculum based on school environments. Situated learning takes professional craft knowledge as its point of departure and from there it constructs and reconstructs pedagogical knowledge through reflection, discussion within communities of practice, and teacher research (Skinner, 2010). However, the main difference between both curricula resided in their overall qualifying function. While the 2007 curriculum only educated teachers for ELT in secondary education, the 2014 curriculum educated teachers for kindergarten, primary and secondary education.

From a practical stance, the 2014 curriculum was formed by fewer modules, most of which were two-term modules. This strengthened the subject matter component as now some of the English-delivered modules were longer or had more teaching hours per week. However, their contents had not undergone major changes. Although contents remained rather unchanged, a new module appeared:

Introduction to Linguistics. The aim of this module was to provide the foundations for Grammar, Phonetics, Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Discourse Analysis.

Intercultural communicative competence was highlighted through its explicit incorporation in the modules English & Interculturality I-III. In these modules, interculturality was addressed by means of topics such as: multiculturalism, interculturality, identity, globalisation, stereotypes, intercultural communicative, competence, otherness, cultural practices, power, ideology, negotiating a grammar of culture, among others.

ICT was maintained as a module. In addition, while the 2007 curriculum was expected to be delivered entirely face-to-face, the 2014 curriculum suggested that 30% of the total number of hours could be delivered online. This meant that all modules had to be face-to-face but some could include an online environment, thus creating blended learning opportunities. Teacher educators could now make extensive use of virtual classrooms and other related tools.

From a curriculum perspective, issues such as inclusivity, diversity, and situated learning for/from professional practices were incorporated in the modules Professional Practice I-IV and the Practicum. Similarly, a new module, ELT Research, was added to attend to these aspects and to promote teacher research and theorisation of reflections and classroom-based explorations.

Table 1 compares both curricula in terms of their four-year organisation. As regards the medium of instruction, those in italics were delivered in Spanish, those with an asterisk in both Spanish and English, and the rest of the modules in English.

**Table 1. Structures of the 2007 and 2014 curricula**

	2007 curriculum		2014 curriculum	
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 1	Term 2
Year 1	Pedagogy Spanish Issues in secondary education	Phonetics & Phonology I General Didactics Psychology	Pedagogy	General Didactics

EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE IN IELTE

	2007 curriculum		2014 curriculum	
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 1	Term 2
Year 1	Professional Practice I* Reading and Academic Writing System of the English Language I English Morphology & Syntax I		Professional Practice I* Reading and Academic Writing Educational Psychology English & Interculturality I English Grammar I Phonetics & Phonology I Introduction to Linguistics	
Year 2	Phonetics & Phonology II ICT Teaching Learners in Secondary Education I	Phonetics & Phonology III ELT Didactics Learners in Secondary Education II	Education & ICT Learners & Learning in Primary Ed.	Sexual Education Learners & Learning in Secondary Ed.
	Professional Practice II* History & Politics of Argentine Education System of the English Language II English Morphology & Syntax II		Professional Practice II* History & Politics of Argentine Education English & Interculturality II English Grammar II Phonetics & Phonology II ELT Didactics for Kinder and Primary Ed.	
Year 3	Philosophy Sexual Education English Diction Society & Culture of English Speaking Peoples Literature I	Sociology Special Needs Education Psycholinguistics Literature II	Sociology of Education Psycholinguistics	<b>Sociolinguistics</b>
	Professional Practice III* System of the English Language III		Professional Practice III & Practicum* Educational Research English & Interculturality III Literary Studies & Culture in English I Phonetics & Phonology III	



2007 curriculum			2014 curriculum	
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 1	Term 2
Year 4	Culture & Contemporary Aesthetics Literature III Academic Production History of the English Language	Latin American and Argentine Literature Semiology & Discourse Analysis	--	--
	Professional Practice IV* Educational Research Ethics & Citizenship Education		Professional Practice IV & Practicum* Philosophy of Education (Institutional Module) English & Discourse Analysis Literary Studies & Culture in English I ELT Research	
Modules	40		34	
Hours	2,944		2,816	

At the IELTE programme delivered in Esquel, the local context of this study, there were two cohorts under the 2007 curriculum. However, with the implementation of the new curriculum for teacher education, the 2014 curriculum was implemented in 2015. Trainees were given the opportunity to transfer their credits from their 2007 curriculum-based programme to the 2014 programme.

## METHODOLOGY

Under a working framework of curriculum development and change characterised by innovation and situated learning, I wished to explore the perceptions of student-teachers and teacher educators as we moved from the 2007 curriculum to the 2014 curriculum.

These research questions guided my examination:

- Did the student-teachers and teacher educators perceive changes as they moved to the new IELTE programme?

- To what extent were the changes made in the IELTE curriculum perceived as advantages by student-teachers and teacher educators?
- Did the new curriculum entail changes in teacher educators' practices?

Following a qualitative research paradigm (Benson et al., 2009; Richards, 2009), I interviewed 10 student-teachers and four teacher educators from the IELTE programme at ISFD 809 (Esquel, Chubut, Argentina). The students-teachers had started in the 2013 and 2014 cohorts following the 2007 curriculum and had transferred to the 2015 cohort under the 2014 curriculum. The group included both males and females and their ages ranged from 19 to 42. Most of them were pre-service student-teachers, but some had some brief teaching experience as substitute teachers in primary and secondary schools. In turn, the teacher-educators had been part of the 2013 and 2014 cohorts and were then in charge of some of the modules in the 2015 cohort. It should be clarified that the four teacher educators belonged to the subject matter and professional practice strands. They were all teachers of English and some had postgraduate degrees in different areas of ELT, ICT and education.

I used semi-structured interviews through the medium of Spanish as it was the L1 all the participants shared. Below I include extracts from the interviews. All names which appear are pseudonyms. All participants were interviewed once. Depending on time constraints, some student-teachers were interviewed in pairs. All teacher educators were interviewed individually. In both groups, participants were asked to (1) describe the programme they had taken/taught initially, (2) express similarities and differences between both programmes in terms of organisation and content, and (3) reflect on whether practices had changed. Interviews were audio-recorded, orthographically transcribed, and analysed through inductive coding. Codes were then grouped into categories in order to arrive at thematic networks (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

## RESULTS

### *Student-teachers' perceptions*

According to the inductive coding and categorisation process carried out with the student-teachers' interviews, the following themes emerged:

- Curriculum contents
- Motivation
- Teacher educators' practices

*Curriculum changes*

All the interviewed student-teachers remarked that they noticed little differences between the 2007 and 2014 curricula as reflected in the 2013-2014 and 2015 programmes/cohorts, in particular as regards contents. In some cases they added that teacher educators had not changed their reading material and bibliography. Only two student-teachers stressed that some of the mandatory textbooks were now more updated.

However, a few student-teachers did notice changes. For example, Alejandro said:

Now we do more work on intercultural issues. We make presentations about different English-speaking countries and discuss more topics related to cultural conceptions. Even if we have almost the same material, we have less but we exploit it a lot more. And in Professional Practice we now talk about diversity, inclusivity, children with special needs, and more practical and theoretical issues around not only secondary school kids but also very young learners.

As regards perceived changes, all the student-teachers welcomed the incorporation of the Introduction to Linguistics module. Among the reasons shared, Camila pointed out that:

It's a module that teaches us a lot about the basis of languages and that's great because it helps us understand the other modules. It also, I think, helps us understand our future role as teachers of a language. I find it fascinating that we talk about language and languages through English, and now and then a little bit in Spanish to draw comparisons.

Two student-teachers expressed that even though there had been no substantial changes in the contents, they felt that:

It's the organisation now. The contents are the same. But some of the bibliography, the sequencing of the contents are different. Like the modules are more logically connected now. Also, we now have more time for practical knowledge, teaching tips, teaching strategies. And that's really useful because some of us are already working as teachers.

A unanimous perception was that generated by the changes in Phonetics and Phonology in terms of its length, from one term to two terms, and its effect on the learning atmosphere. Patricia said:

We all feel more relaxed now compared to what we went through before. In the past, all the contents were too crammed. It was terribly stressful. We had to do most of the work at home. We now have time to practise, ask, revisit contents, and rehearse in class. Even the teacher educator in charge of Phonetics looks more comfortable and relaxed because we now have more time.

### *Motivation*

All the student-teachers asserted that their motivations to transfer to the 2015 cohort (under the 2014 curriculum) were that the new degree broadened their job perspectives as they would now be qualified to teach very young learners and adolescents. In addition, some thought that because they had failed some core modules, this was a new opportunity to retake those modules.

Classroom dynamics acted as a source of motivation to one student-teacher. Elisa explained that

We now participate more. We talk more. We can work in groups. And I like that because I'm very shy and it gives me the chance to use English with my peers in a less intimidating environment.

All the students mentioned the absence of changes as regards assessment criteria and instruments between the programmes. Nonetheless, only one student-teacher suggested that the absence of mandatory final exams for some modules acted as a demotivator:

Final exams give you a purpose, the chance to integrate and revise all the contents and assignments submitted. Without that I feel like I only need to pass the mid-term exams but that I don't need to worry much about anything else.

### *Teacher educators' practices*

Although the contents had remained stable between curricula, some student-teachers noticed differences in the teacher educators' professional practices. Nonetheless, they had heterogeneous perceptions.

For example, Juan Marcos said:

This trainer hasn't changed a thing. The module is a bit different, but the way the lessons are taught is the same. I think that it's got to do with personal styles and personality traits. If you're boring, you'll be boring no matter what you teach.

At the other end of the spectrum, several student-teachers noticed an increase in practical knowledge, participation, and deductive or tutor-fronted teaching. Camila's comment illustrates this shared view:

For example in professional practice we used to talk a lot about our feelings and preconceptions and what you think about this that and almost at the end of the year we got the theory. Now, it's more organised, like we first read the theory, the tutor explains, and then we work in groups and discuss with the support of the authors read. In Grammar we feel the same. Before, it was a lot of self-study practice and error correction. Only two or three lectures were interesting because the time was devoted to explaining. Now, there are more explanations from the tutor at the beginning and then we move on to different activities and projects.

None of the student-teachers mentioned the inclusion of ICT in the programme or the benefits of the virtual environments which they had.

### *Teacher-educators' perceptions*

Based on the four interviews carried out with the four teacher educators, the following categories emerged as major themes:

- Awareness of official curricula
- Subject-matter knowledge
- Concerns with student-teachers' trajectories
- Professional practice

### *Awareness of official curricula*

When asked to describe the 2007 curriculum, the four teacher educators showed a vague awareness of it. Only two of them were aware of how curricula were developed in the province of Chubut. For example, María said:

If I'm not mistaken, colleagues from the different higher education institutions participated in the design of the curriculum. But I'm not sure whether all teacher educators had the opportunity to contribute to it.

They mainly knew about their own modules, assessment practices, and the perception that the Spanish-medium modules outnumbered those in English, which, in their view, affected student-teachers' English language proficiency. None of the teacher educators indicated that they had thoroughly read either the 2007 or the 2014 curriculum. They indicated that they had read the aims, contents, and suggested bibliography for the modules they were expected to lead. As an example, Cristina said:

I'm not going to read all that mumbo jumbo. I just read what I need to write my proposal. I read the contents and the assessment criteria. After so many years of experience I know that there's nothing new under the sun. They just change a name here, a word there and that's it. Essentially, the contents of Grammar are the same. Always.

### *Subject-matter knowledge*

The four teacher educators referred extensively to those modules which belonged to the subject matter strand. They agreed that it was essential that student-teachers could be exposed to English through different modules given their low entry English proficiency level.

They welcomed the fact that the Phonetics and Phonology and the Literature modules were two-term long in the 2014 curriculum as they believed that they an increase in exposure would allow student-teachers to strengthen their subject-matter knowledge. However, they had reservations about the inclusion of the Introduction to Linguistics module in Year 1. As Lucas, one teacher educator, put it:

Linguistics in Year 1? In English? I don't know if they'll be able to cope with it. It'll be very very basic because they don't have enough English to grasp all those abstract concepts and theories. They will have to study it by heart and repeat like parrots.

*Concerns with student-teachers' trajectories*

The entry level student-teachers had was a major concern among the teacher educators. They viewed it as a challenge for their trajectories as student-teachers and novice teachers. Thus, subject-matter knowledge was seen as an issue which could affect other areas of the programme.

For example, Lucas was concerned with how the student-teachers' English proficiency could act as a drop-out factor during the four-year course:

They know very little English. Some of them have an elementary level. Now they have more English hours and that's great, but the question is whether that will help them now. They need more English now. Imagine when they have to write essays and read Literature. They will drop. At some point they'll see that it's a mountain too high to climb. Even if they learn more English, they won't be able to process everything we need them to process now or tomorrow.

Gabriel, another teacher educator, mentioned:

I'm worried because these people, well, some of them, are teaching already. What are they teaching? How do they give explanations? What kind of lessons do they plan? It's difficult but we have to give them tools to make them succeed. If their level is low, it will affect the reputation of the programme and our work.

*Professional practice*

Under this theme I condensed those views related to the teacher educators' own professional practice under both programmes.

In relation to differences between the programmes, Gabriel noted:

I don't quite see any changes. My module didn't change substantially. The aims are the same. The contents are the same. Perhaps what I've done now is, well I updated the bibliography and, obviously, changed the assignments and core textbooks. And I teach it the same way. It's always different of course depending on the students, but I use the same strategies like group work, study guides they need to complete and we then check and I provide further explanations.

In contrast, María did notice a change in her professional practice:

I feel more comfortable now! Before Phonetics was only one term. I had to rush to cover all the contents. Now I feel more relaxed, like we can practise more in class. I changed the coursebooks and the texts to transcribe. I give them (the student teachers) more room to participate.

In a similar vein, Lucas expressed:

I feel that my module is more organised. And it's more organic with the other modules. I use new coursebooks and develop more guides for autonomous learning. Perhaps they're all more linked now than before. I don't know. I now do more group work and encourage more co-construction of ideas, or the development of concepts based on their prior knowledge. It's also true that some of them have some knowledge as they come from the 2013 cohort. But still, I feel more confident myself and this also because we now have more experience in IELTE.

Similarly to the student-teachers' perceptions, none of the teacher educators mentioned the use of ICT or the use of virtual environments to support face-to-face learning. Even when I was aware of the fact that two of the teacher educators interviewed did make use of virtual classrooms, they did not put forward any relevant comments in that respect.

In my capacity as course coordinator I did notice some changes in our professional practices as teacher educators. All of us introduced a virtual component in our practices. We increased the use of our private Facebook groups with the student-teachers to share interesting articles, videos, jokes, and sites where they could benefit from further practice. We had meetings for planning our lessons and materials and agreeing on more flexible and inclusive assessment criteria and instruments. We increased the time devoted to practice and practical aspects of our modules, and we started having guest speakers (e.g. a Fulbright language assistant, a doctoral student from the UK). We even had some sessions planned and delivered by more than one teacher educator.

## DISCUSSION

In this section I will attempt to answer my research questions under the light of the changes exerted in curriculum development and the literature review included in this article.



*Did the student-teachers and teacher educators perceive changes as they moved to the new IELTE programme?*

According to the data analysed, the student-teachers' perceived changes were coherent with the 2014 curriculum.

First, they did notice changes in the organisation of the overall programme: the transformation of one-term modules into two-term modules and the reduction of overall attendance time. Conversely, the option of including 30% of the course time in a blended learning format was neglected.

Second, they also perceived the minimal changes made in the contents. Some of them made reference to updated bibliography and interculturality. However, the most noticeable transformations were those offered through Introduction to Linguistics and Professional Practice. While the former aimed at providing student-teachers with the foundations for the subject matter strand, the latter constituted the initiation of the fieldwork and the preliminaries of ELT with very young and young learners together with issues of diversity, inclusivity, and special needs. Last, they noticed a bibliography update and a change in the classroom dynamics, particularly as a result of an increase in group work and practice.

While these three student-teachers' perceptions were coherent with the changes introduced by the curriculum developers (Banegas, 2014), these changes were not reflected in the same way by the four teacher educators. It seems that they were not fully aware of the contents and rationale of both curricula. They only noticed structural changes which affected their teaching workload and the extension of the teaching qualification to kindergarten and primary school levels. Their major concerns were with the entry level of student-teachers and their trajectories, regardless of the curriculum they were under. In contrast to this, English proficiency never emerged as an obstacle among the student-teachers.

*To what extent were the changes made in the IELTE curriculum perceived as advantages by student-teachers and teacher educators?*

The changes perceived by the student-teachers were assessed as advantages. They welcomed the inclusion of Introduction to Linguistics because it provided them with a framework for the study and use of language. Furthermore, they welcomed the changes made in Professional Practice and the time transformations in Phonetics and Phonology. Above all, the most positively perceived change was that given by the change in the teaching qualification and the job opportunities it created for them.

In contrast, the teacher educators did not find any of these changes transformative, except for Phonetics and Phonology. Together with the lack of awareness of the changes introduced, a second explanation for this apparent disregard may be based on the little experience these teacher educators had with enacting the 2007 curriculum. They may not have had the time to embrace and understand it through the two cohorts available, and then, they had to adapt to the new 2014 curriculum.

For the teacher educators, it seems that the nature, rationale, and scope of the curriculum changes were determined and inherently affected by the student-teachers' English proficiency prior to the beginning of the four-year course. In other words, it appeared to them that the success of the innovation was dependent on the student-teachers solely.

*Did the new curriculum entail changes in teacher educators' practices?*

In this respect, both student-teachers and teacher-educators noticed some changes as regards the use of new bibliography, the increase of group work, and the more constructive atmosphere caused by a less stressful timetable. Student-teachers in particular noticed congruence between modules at the level of contents, aims, and practices.

Nevertheless, the curriculum innovations regarding situated learning and a stronger sociocultural perspective were neither favoured nor enacted. In the 2014 curriculum, teacher educators were advised to engage student-teachers in inductive learning opportunities, theorisation based on prior experiences and overall learner biographies, and discussion and challenge of "received" theories. According to the student-teachers' perceptions, they seemed to assess such practices as confusing, based on what they experienced with the programme. In contrast, they showed positive reactions to a preponderance of external theories, and deductive teaching which was sequenced as follows: tutor-fronted explanations and practice, either individually or in groups, in class under the tutor's guidance. Autonomy, which could have been sought through self-study material both printed and online (use of virtual classrooms), was not considered an asset either by the student-teachers or the teacher educators.

In general lines, we may observe that the innovation of the 2014 curriculum was assessed through two major fields: (1) subject matter, and (2) professional practice.

As for subject-matter, as supported in the literature reviewed above, it constituted a strong motivating factor and a source of interest for both student-

teachers and teacher educators. Nevertheless, they approached it from different angles. On the one hand, student-teachers perceived the new curriculum as an opportunity for language development and improvement. They valued the inclusion of interculturality, module Introduction to Linguistics, and progressive updatedness of bibliography. On the other hand, teacher educators viewed subject-matter as an obstacle or strand which student-teachers were not prepared for.

In relation to professional practice, inclusion and diversity, in line with Rouse (2010), were highly valued as innovative components. However, the innovation of moving from deductive to inductive formative practices received negative feedback and was not, it seems, fully put into practice by the teacher educators. In this regard, neither student-teachers nor teacher educators seem to favour such an approach. Perhaps, at the level of teacher education, the main area of concern should be teacher educators' lack of awareness of this explicit curricular recommendation and, by extension, possible enactment of incongruent practices because student teachers would be expected to teach lessons characterised by inductive, self-discovery, and language awareness principles which were not usually observed in the teacher educators' themselves.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Following Sanchez de Magurno (2015), innovation and change in teacher education curriculum development are vital, dynamic, and necessary processes. These, it seems, need to occur progressively and with the full endorsement of all actors involved. Participation and ongoing programme evaluation are necessary to examine the extent to which such changes are implemented, challenged, created and re-created in practice depending on a whole array of contextual factors.

This small-scale investigation seems to underline the need to increase the involvement of teacher educators in curriculum development and create opportunities for them to understand changes and innovation, and to discuss ways in which such changes could be realised in the modules they lead. There is also a need to create institutional spaces to strengthen the cohesive ties among the different components of the IELTE programme and the structuring and foundational concepts which support all modules, regardless of whether they belong to the subject-matter or pedagogic strand. In this regard, creating a vision for/from the curriculum is fundamental.

A limitation of this study was the absence of observation and triangulation of the collected perceptions. Future research should examine the extent to which curriculum changes in IELTE are brought to life in teacher educators' practices in different contexts, management conditions, and power relations.

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